

T H E
C A P T I V E S

A
T R A G E D Y;

As Performed at the
THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE

By the Author of
THE ROYAL SUPPLIANTS.

L O N D O N :
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M D C C L X X X V I .





ADVERTISEMENT.

THE *Captives* are at length released from the theatre, where they have been confined for more than three months; and now they hope to find a sanctuary in the closet. It was the intention of the author, throughout his piece, to make experiment of a style and diction, different from what are usual in modern Tragedy. Over-wrought ornaments, and pompous versification, he thought, ill suited to the manners of those early times, in which the action of his Tragedy is supposed to have passed. In a word, he was of opinion, that the language of simplicity would best accord with the subject and the characters: but whether a plain, intelligible, and unaffected style, would be acceptable to the public taste, was what he had still to learn. The experiment has been made; and the author retires with the satisfaction of having, at least, intended well.

March 12, 1786.



P R O L O G U E,

By THOMAS VAUGHAN, Esq.

The Speaker Mr. BANNISTER, jun. in the Character of a distressed and disappointed Poet, peeping in at the door, looks round the house.

A RE you all seated—may I venture in?
[Noise behind.
 Hush—be quiet—stop your unfriendly din—
 Whilst I—with more than common grief oppress'd,
 A tale unfold—just bursting from my breast.

[Advancing, points to the Pit doors.
 But first—are both your pit doors shut, I pray?
 Or noise will drown, my strictures on the play,
[Noise from front boxes opening doors and calling places.
 Do you hear—how very hard my case is—
 Instead of bravo, bravo--places--places-----*[mimicking.*
 Your seat, my Lord, is here—your La'ship's there,
 Indeed it quite distracts both bard and player.
 Truce then with your confounded clank of keys,
 And tell these fair disturbers of our ease,
At church, perhaps, 'tis no such mighty crime,
 But *here*—quite vulgar to be out of time.

[Noise from front boxes repeated.
 Again—why sure the devil's in the clown,
 Do pray Sir Harry knock that fellow down.—*[pointing.*
 And you, ye Gods—it were a dreadful shock,
 If thrown from thence—a Critic's head is rock.--*[the pit.*
 So keep your centres, and my bus'ness know;
 I am a bard, as these my *Acts* will shew.

[Pulling out plays from each coat pocket.
 But then the managers—aye! there's the curse
 Which makes us *patient* bear the sad reverse,

To hear, they've several pieces to peruse,
 And when I call, all answer they refuse.
 But say, is't fit, that mine be laid aside,
 To gratify their present author's pride?
 Who comes with nature, and such idle stuff,
 As please my friends above there well enough—

[*the galleries.*

When I, more bold and daring, quit all rules,
 [In the pompous burlesque of Tragedy.

And scorn to draw from Classics and the Schools ;

But bid the dreadful furies from a grave,

To sink the merchant "in the bankrupt way."

Or when I long for fair Aurora's light,

"I am witch-ridden by the hag of night,"

Thus always keep *sublimity* in eye,

And sometimes hand in hand---*simplicity*.

New traps, new passages for ever raise,

With starts and attitudes to gain your praise,

Try every incident of trick and art,

To mend, at once, the drama and the heart.

Such is *my* style, and such each nervous line,

Which all my friends who read pronounce divine ;

And yet these hostile doors their barriers keep,

And all *my* labours---in my pockets sleep. [Pointing to them.

Revenge my cause, assert each critic right,

And damn, with me, the author of to-night,

Whose play, tho' yet *unknown, untried, unseen,*

Has felt in paragraphs an author's spleen.

But hark!--I'll tell you a secret---'twas I,

Who drew the shaft, and forg'd th' envenom'd lie,

To crush this simple nature which he boasts,

Drawn from the manners of the northern coasts ;

For should *his* hope your generous plaudits meet,

I shall be found aboard---the *Lighter Fleet*.

[Advances forward and kneels.

Then hear a malefactor in blank verse,

Nor be led *captive*, by his Gothick Erse,

But urge my vengeance, in the cat-call's curse.

[Going stops, and looks around the house.

Yet,

Yet, hold ; methinks my words seem lost in air,
And smiles of candour for the bard declare ;
For here no *secret influence* e'er was known,
But merit triumphs in *herself alone*
As all who know ye, must in this agree,
A British audience *ever* will be free.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

CONNAT,	Mr. BARRYMORE.
ERRAGON,	Mr. SMITH.
HIDALLAN,	Mr. BENSLEY.
EVERALLIN,	Mr. KEMBLE.

W O M E N.

MALVINA,	Mrs. SIDDONS.
MINLA,	Mrs. KEMBLE.
VIRGIN,	Miss TIDSWELL.

SCENE, *Morven* in Caledonia.

THE CAPTIVES.

A C T I.

A Vestibule. At the End of it a Tomb.

ERRAGON, *with a drawn Sword.*

ERRAGON.

TURN not, upon thy life ! inhuman wretch !
 Fate hovers o'er thy head. Another blow,
 Thou worse than savage ! sinks thee to the tomb.
 —And yet too honourably would'st thou fall.

Enter MINLA.

ERRAGON.

Nay, gentle lady, start not ; there's no danger.
 Self-preservation drew my vengeance down
 On yon relentless ruffian ; who, in scorn
 Of hospitality's most sacred laws,
 Assail'd a ship-wreck'd stranger. My sword's sheath'd ;
 And thou behold'st a suppliant, who intreats
 To know upon what shore a storm hath cast him ;
 And of whose charity he may implore
 Mere sustenance for life.

MINLA.

Thy desperate act
 Strikes me with terror, and, didst thou conceive

B

Thy

Thy danger, thee alike would terrify.
 But hard necessity, that breaks all bounds,
 Extenuates all offence. I mourn thy lot;
 And my heart longs to lighten what it mourns.
 Know then, poor stranger, that this northern part
 Of Caledonia, ridged with rocky hills,
 Is Morven called; where Connal rules supreme
 In Selma's royal palace!

ERRAGON.

Connal!

MINLA.

Connal,

Whose father's sepulchre thou there behold'st,
 The venerable Oskar.

ERRAGON.

Tell me yet—

MINLA.

Nay risk no further parley. Whence thou comest,
 I know not. If from Lochlin, as thy vest
 And helmet seem to note; fly hence with speed,
 Whilst flight is in thy power. The storm that wrecked
 thee,

Is not more merciless than Morven's king,
 To every wretch from thence. Oh! then be warned.

ERRAGON.

Thanks, gracious lady.—Yet, an outcast here,
 Roving o'er pathless wilds, may hardly hope
 The like fair courtesy he finds in thee.

MINLA.

The rivulet, winding round yon shrub-clad hill,
 Close by a cave, within a rifted rock,
 Will lead thy steps; whose tenant, should'st thou mention
 The name of Minla, will with food supply thee,
 And friendly shelter, till thou ventur'st forth,
 In midnight's mantle shrouded.

ERRAGON.

E R R A G O N.

For such grace,
Spirits of goodness ever be thy guides,
And fortune thy companion ! [Exit.

M I N L A.

Oh, how sorely
Mischance lets fall her hand on this poor sufferer,
To a wide world exposed ! Well may it fare,
And prosperously with thee. Whence that noise ?
He is beset. Yon baffled ruffian heads
A lawless band ; and down the hollow glen
They follow fast upon him. Hapless man !
Thy days, in this inhospitable land,
I fear are number'd.—Mine may number more ;
But am I therein happier ? Ah, Malvina !
I come to mourn thy lot, from him who feels
An interest there, too tender for my peace,
Thy Everallin. On me, wretched woman !
Colder of comfort than the north wind blows,
Falls every chilling glance. Yet my heart still
Loves thee, Malvina ; and my faithful tongue
Shall his kind message bear.

A Door opening, discovers MALVINA kneeling at a Sepulchre. Her VIRGIN advances.

V I R G I N.

What plaintive sounds
Break on the silence of this awful dome ?
Was 't Minla's voice I heard ?

M I N L A.

Led by my love,
I with Malvina came to sympathize.

V I R G I N.

Lo, where she kneels.

THE CAPTIVES,

M I N L A.

How motionless!—ah me!
That bursting groan.

M A L V I N A.

Hear, venerable Oscar!
Whom every sorrowing heart in Selma mourns,
But chiefly thy sad captive. From the grave
Hear! and thy son's licentious passion quell,
Which hourly wounds her spirit, whom from bondage
Thy gracious goodness promised to release.
Quell it; or let this marble monument
Unfold, and swallow me.

M I N L A.

My bleeding heart
Can bear no longer—dearest lady!

M A L V I N A.

Minla!

M I N L A.

Is't of necessity, thy soul should heave
Th' eternal sigh! ah, must Malvina live
Interr'd within the tomb?

M A L V I N A.

This tomb's my altar,
Th' asylum a dead father lends my virtue,
Against a bold bad son; the sole resource
Of wretchedness, which hope itself forsakes.

M I N L A.

Give to the winds these bodings of despair.

M A L V I N A.

Ye towers of Selma! and thou mournful flood,
Strumon! whose sullen waves gloom round the rock,
Oft have you heard my anguish; heard me weep,
To the pale midnight moon, th' intestine broils,
That from my country drove me on the seas;
Where with brute rage, this royal plunderer

Boarded,

Boarded, and sunk my bark : but not the loss
Of country ; not captivity itself ;
With its worst horrors, Connal's hateful passion,
Have power to break this heart.

M I N L A.

My errand will not,
I fear, bring comfort ; kindly as it comes
From the king's brother.

M A L V I N A.

Generous Everallin ?
Oh, how unlike that king ? next thee, my Minla,
My best support, whose consolation oft
Has quieted this conflict.

M I N L A.

Now no words
He sends of consolation to Malvina.
Dark doubts instead, and dismal apprehensions.
Now he forewarns thee to beware the worst ;
For he suspects the worst. A sudden call
T' attend the king prevented his approach ;
And he intreats thee not to quit this tomb,
Thy safest sanctuary.

M A L V I N A.

What sanctuary
Is safe from such a king ? he'll force me hence.

M I N L A.

His fears won't suffer him. Th' incensed people,
T' avert th' impending curse, would headlong hurl
The tyrant from his throne, who dared such outrage
On a sepulchral monument. Be this
Malvina's comfort.

M A L V I N A.

For me, there's no comfort.
Ye waves, that bore me towards a friendly port,

Al,

Ah, wherefore were you not that hour my grave !
 Death I with transport would have clasped, to 'scape
 That monster's loathed love. Oh, my kind Minla,
 If there's a wretch forlorn of every hope,
 Who calls on cruel powers of earth and air,
 And longs to give up life ; tell her my tale,
 And she'll forget to weep her lighter lot.

M I N L A.

Grief loves to dwell upon the gloomier side,
 Still darkening each distress. The king, thou know'st,
 With awful reverence my fire reveres,
 Th' instructor of his youth ; and how my fire
 Venerates Malvina's virtues, her own heart
 Wants not my testimony.

M A L V I N A.

Good Hidallan !

Might friendship's sage and salutary counsel
 Afford protection, I were safe in thine.
 But three long days have past without his presence.
 The king perhaps forbids him to approach ?
 Thence he may next forbid. Oh, ere that hour,
 Thou righteous father of an impious son,
 Spirit of Oscar ! take me. [*She retires to the tomb.*]

M I N L A.

Go not back.

To thy own tomb, alas, these bursts of woe
 Too surely will dispatch thee.

Enter H I D A L L A N.

M I N L A.

Timely com'st thou,
 My honoured fire : see where, the live-long day,
 Pondering she sits o'er the low sepulchre.
 Must her sad tears for ever, ever flow ?

H I D A L L A N.

A T R A G E D Y.

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H I D A L L A N.

I'm not familiar with the powers of fate,
To say how long, but without cause, my child,
Th' unhappy mourner weeps not.

M I N L A.

The king cannot,
Bold as he is, profane his father's tomb?

H I D A L L A N.

Who shall restrain him? what he will, he can.
And what licentious love may urge his will
To perpetrate, who knows?

M I N L A.

But lives there not
(Sure I have heard my father say there lives)
A spark of fire ethereal in the breast,
That makes the spirit shrink appalled at guilt?

H I D A L L A N.

Such fire diffused through nature I believe;
But dormant and inactive, it awakes not
At every slight rebuke: the blow must be
Of force, that strikes it from a hardened heart.

M I N L A.

And who so fit, with forcible effect,
To strike it, as Hidallan? yes, the duty
Due to his sage preceptor—

H I D A L L A N.

Ah, my Minla,
Little will that avail, his towering passions
Bear all before them down with sovereign sway,
Disdainful of controul.

M A L V I N A *returns from the tomb.*

M A L V I N A.

That well-known voice
With soothing sound recalls me from the tomb.

Thy

26 T H E C A P T I V E S,

Thy gracious visit, what may it import ?
Oh say, what to this house of horror draws
The venerable Hidallan !

H I D A L L A N.

That sweet aspect,
Those gentle graces, lady, which the gales
Of grief scarce ruffle ; nay thy grief itself,
So lovely in the looks of innocence ;
These, charming mourner ! as they oft have drawn,
Might hither draw me now.—But ah, they do not.
The king—

M A L V I N A.

My boding bosom !

M I N L A.

Speak, oh speak !

M A L V I N A.

Something, not to be spoken, he hath heard.
I would not hear it. Ah, I dare not hear,
What, like the thunderbolt, would strike me dead.
But would it strike me dead ? how joyfully
On the dread tidings should I then repose,
As on the bosom of an only friend,
My weary soul to rest !

H I D A L L A N.

The king, Malvina,
Has order'd my attendance at the tomb.
Something untoward has chanced. The darken'd moon,
'Mongst meteors of the night, looks not more gloomy,
Than Connal 'mongst his chiefs. The cause I know not ;
Nor could he well express. But sure his breast,
Like ocean's, in the last night's hurricane,
Is tost with tumult.

M A L V I N A.

Ceaseless may it toss !

Yes, let his guilt, the horror of his guilt,

Become

Become my dread avenger ! 'tis the last
Of conscience, from the power within the soul.

H I D A L L A N.

Yet, lady, listen. Suddenly he called
A council ; then forbade, and then recalled it.
Abruptly from the hall he broke away :
At once returning as abruptly back,
He bade me wait him here. Then, starting, cried,
Malvina shall be mine !

M A L V I N A.

The monster ! his ?
Shall I be his, ye ministering powers of air !
Who, on your dim clouds riding, saw the robber,
In the dread moment I became his captive,
Plunge in my father's breast his murd'rous sword,
And whelm him in the waves ?

H I D A L L A N.

Unhappy lady !

Ne'er did the tidings of that tragic tale
Reach me till now.

M A L V I N A.

The tyrant knows it not,
Nor, to this hour, suspects he who I am.
But as thou art too generous, good Hidallan,
To shrink from Virtue's side, howe'er oppressed ;
Let not the midnight ruffian twice attempt
To violate my honour. Oh prevent
Our mortal meeting.

H I D A L L A N.

He approaches ; quell,
If possible, this glow of vehemence.

Enter CONNALL.

CONNALL.

Where are thy smiles, Malvina? those soft smiles,
And winning graces, beauty wears, t'allure
The eye of adoration? Sullen fair!
To lift thee to a lucid orb I came,
And make thee the world's gaze. Whence then those
 glances
Of cold disdain? Why trembles thy whole frame?

MALVINA.

And wonder'st thou that innocence should tremble?
Wonder, that it should look on thee and live:
On thee, whose words, like pestilential vapours,
Strike all that's good and virtuous.

CONNALL.

Proud woman!

Whom a king's courtesy but makes more proud.
This thy return? my chiefs I had inform'd, [*to* Hidalla.
Would'st thou believe? that she should be my queen.
The feast of shells is spread; and thro' the hall,
To the sweet voice of fair Malvina's praise,
A hundred harps are heard. I meant, Hidallan,
Spite of revolting royalty, I meant,
This evening sun should see me wed my slave.

MALVINA.

Let, let it not behold th' unseemly fight.
Not see your royalty abased so low.
No; for some nobler head reserve your crown;
Some nobler heart.—

CONNALL.

Presumptuous!

MALVINA.

Scorn, reject me.

I ask

I ask no honours ; I no peace can feel,
Till far from Morvan—

C O N N A L.

And from Morvan far,
Back to thy native nothing should'st thou go ;
But that my pride forbids. In thy own spite,
Thou shalt be mine. Prepare the nuptial rites.

M A L V I N A.

If ever pity touched thee—

C O N N A L.

Am I heard ?

M A L V I N A.

The loss of liberty, the drops of anguish,
Wrung from a bleeding heart, I pardon thee.
He heeds me not, inhuman !—Then to thee,
Spirit of Loda ! my sole guardian now,
Bursts my sad soul : if at thy stone of power,
I've bent with reverent awe ; in clouded thunder,
Rise, terrible shade ! and from the monster's grasp,
Save, save thy Erragon's distracted wife !

C O N N A L.

The wife of Erragon ? recall thy words.

M A L V I N A.

Impossible. Here, here, they're registered ;
Never to be erased.

C O N N A L.

The prince of Sora !

My mortal foe ! from whence ? what country com'st
thou ?

M A L V I N A.

From Inistone.

C O N N A L.

Confusion ! art thou then
Daughter of that proud chief, who rules the isle,

THE CAPTIVES,

Morla? who leagues with Sora's haughty prince,
Against my kingdom?

MALVINA.

Morla was my father;
Who died, Barbarian! by the bloody sword
That made me captive.

CONNAL.

Said'st thou? did he bow
His haughty crest to me! thy Erragon,
Had he been there, had shrunk too; but his pride
Shall feel a different downfall.

MINLA.

Ah, she faints,
Beneath the conflict.

Enter an Officer.

OFFICER.

Royal Sir, the vessel,
Driven on the sands, last night, from Locklin comes.
Most, who the storm escaped, are prisoners made.

CONNAL.

To death with every one. Yes, let them fall
A sacrifice for all the blood they've drawn
From Caledonia's sons. [Exit Officer.]

MINLA.

Oh quickly summon
Thy utmost powers; for thou need'st all, Malvina,
At this distressful hour.

CONNAL.

Mark me, Hidallan:
Most heedfully, before the waning moon
Darkens behind Carthmona's tower, give notice
That every rite is done. I've spoke; dispatch.
[Exit Hid.
Meantime,

Meantime do thou with smiles of love, proud woman,
Prepare thee for the nuptials. [*Exit CONNALL.*]

M A L V I N A.

Heard'st thou that?

With smiles of love prepare me for his nuptials;
Diseases rather let me wed; and love
The terriblest distress.

M I N L A.

My anxious spirits,
That vainly would lend comfort, dread the worst.
Wretches like him go on from guilt to guilt,
Till scornful malice laughs at all remorse.

M A L V I N A.

Minla, their laugh's a lie; they're cowards here—
Inward misgivings gnaw the ulcer'd heart.
These are the fiends that, in distracted slumbers,
At midnight haunt the man of murder. These
Th' infernal torches flaring in his face.
Prepare me for his nuptials? No; I've sworn.

M I N L A.

He knows his power opposeless.

M A L V I N A.

Dreams he so?

Yet woes wrought up to this stupendous height
May chance to make him shrink.

M I N L A.

That fearful smile
The tumult of a tortured spirit speaks.
Like the red flame of lightning, that unfolds
The troubled breast of heaven.

M A L V I N A.

Fast as thy love
Will speed thee, my kind Minla, to his brother
Haste, and intreat his presence.

M I N L A.

M I N L A.

Everallin's?

M A L V I N A.

Instantly, at his father's sepulchre.

M I N L A.

Yes; I obey your bidding.

[Exit.

M A L V I N A.

Yet, alas!

How ineffectual every human aid!

The foreign vessel, driven last night on shore,

Gave me some glimmering hope of an escape;

But Erin brings no tidings of its fate,

Or destination.—Mine comes on apace.

My marriage now is known. This dire extreme

Alone could pluck the secret from my breast;

For, like the grave, the tyrant hates my lord.

Yet am I still his wife, living or dead.

But my heart bodes; unable to survive

His country's loss; and oh, the loss of me;

He followed my poor father; and now lies

Buried, alas! within the billowy deep,

Unseen, unknown. No bard shall chant his fate;

No mossy stone shall rise in his renown.

Oh, miserable thought! Must I then live

Of both bereft? Husband and father both!

This tyrant, dearest Erragon! shall he

Wed thy loved wife? my father's murderer

Pollute his daughter's bed! No, blessed shades!

But how prevent?—has poison lost its power?

Or yon steep crag, that headlong overhangs

'Th' unfathom'd flood.

Enter E R I N.

M A L V I N A.

Oh, Erin, art thou come?

Hast

Hast thou enquired the state of those poor wretches
Cast on the shore? their vessel, will it again
Venture upon its voyage?

E R I N.

'Tis dashed in pieces.

M A L V I N A.

Then farewell every hope of an escape!
Oh, I'm the sport of fortune!

E R I N.

All the crew,
Ill fated men, are prisoners. He who found
Shelter in yonder cave, beside the cliff,
Within this hour was seiz'd; and must abide
The lot of all from Lochlin.

M A L V I N A.

Lochlin! came
The ship from Lochlin! What's the prisoner's name?

E R I N.

His name I could not learn—their chief, no doubt,
For gallantly 'gainst numbers did he fight.
Of some note too and rank; for 'mid th' encounter,
Struck from his head, a burnish'd helmet fell,
Studded with four large gems; and, bold in front,
Towers a young eagle in embroidered gold.

M A L V I N A.

Fly—fetch it—kneel, intreat them for a moment
To trust it hither. *[Exit ERIN.]*

Should it prove my gift!
My soul dies in my bosom at the thought!
Just such a helmet, with an eagle's form,
Brodered in gold, the work of my own hands,
Bright emblem of himself! when he went forth
To deal his vengeance on the rebel hosts,
I gave to Erragon; my best beloved!
Should it prove that!—Oh, this suspense is death!

Yonder's the cave. Fate drives me on. I'll see it,
Though the dread fight should turn me into stone. [*Exit.*]

End of the First Act.

A C T II.

S C E N E *continues.*

ERIN and VIRGIN.

ERIN.

MALVINA not returned! Oh, that these lips
In silence had been sealed, when I first mentioned
The shipwrecked stranger!

VIRGIN.

The most prudent cannot
Guard against all mischance.

ERIN.

The clifted cave
Scarce had I reach'd, when she, with breathless haste
Before me rushed. At once she saw, she seized
The helmet and the sword: the fight whereof
Struck like a basilisk her starting eye.
But when she heard the stranger was born off
To suffer with the victims; oh, what words

Have

Have power to paint the agony, the frenzy,
With which she bounded after him!

V I R G I N.

On the instant,
You should have followed, should have forced her back
From that inhuman scene—but Minla comes.
We must not now be questioned of Malvina. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter M I N L A.

M I N L A.

The prince approaches ; and my fluttering heart
Bounds, but not with delight ! Oh, jealousy !
That with one glance turn’st friendship to a thread
Touched by a flaming brand ; hence from my breast.
It will not hence ; and all Malvina’s charms
Dart their envenomed stings into my soul.
She’s the bright star that darkens my dim light.
Yet, yet, she cannot Everallin wed,
Her Erragon alive—should he be dead ?
I’ll enter, to avoid the horrid thought ;
And be the harbinger of my own fate. [*Exit.*]

Enter E V E R A L L I N.

E V E R A L L I N.

Whence this tumultuous glow as I advance ?
A sepulchre should gloomier thoughts inspire ;
Thoughts cold and comfortless. Divine Malvina !
Thy summons, thy dear summons, is the charm
That fires th’ exulting soul of Everallin.
Who would not woo such gentle vassalage ?
Lighter than liberty are love’s soft links,
That fasten soul to soul. And then so pure,
So perfect is her life, that every mortal
Goes mended from her presence.

D

M I N L A

THE CAPTIVES,

M I N L A *enters.*

E V E R A L L I N.

Wherefore trembles

Minla with such emotion? where's Malvina?

M I N L A.

Ah, where indeed! The mountain-cave I've search'd,
 And where the sea-fowl make their lonely haunt,
 Close by the lake. Malvina is not there.
 No one is there to say which way she went,
 Or who hath forced her hence.

E V E R A L L I N.

Thou torturest me!

M I N L A.

My lord?

E V E R A L L I N.

Thy every word is here a sword.

Whither could she betake her, hapless woman!
 Unfriended and unguarded, her own fears
 Would at the tomb confine her. Should the king
 With desperate hand have hurried her away?
 But no; each guardian spirit would interpose.
 Minla, no earthly thing was half so good,
 Was half so lovely. Sensible, like thee,
 To every charm; my heart, like thine, was lodged
 Within her beauteous bosom. Something here
 Impels me onward.—Gentle maid, once more
 Wilt thou with me renew thy forrowing search? [*Exeunt*]

Enter CONNAL, followed by Bards and Officers.

C O N N A L.

Attend the reverend train at our command?

O F F I C E R.

A band, selected by their white-haired chief,
 In slow solemnity, with lute and lyre,
 Obey your royal bidding. Lo, they come.

C O N N A L.

CONNAL.

Oh, shameful weakness ! oh, indignity !
 But 'tis a curse that baffles all my powers.
 Spite of myself, this effort I must make ;
 The only one untried.—Approach the tomb,
 Sons of the song. Carril, and thou sweet bard,
 Melodious Ullin, strike, symphonious strike
 The lyre of love ; and sad Malvina's spirit
 Sooth, as ye may, with music's melting notes.

O D E.

I.

Sweet tenant of the tomb !
 Who, on thy snow-white arm reclined,
 Sit'st heark'ning to the hollow wind ;
 Ah why, in youth's gay bloom,
 Shroud that fair form, which might display
 New graces to the golden day,
 In this sepulchral gloom !

II.

Music's enchanting lyre,
 Of power t' unbind the midnight spell ;
 Or souls in savages that dwell
 To melt with soft desire,
 She heeds not. From your cloud above,
 Burst then, some spirit, who died of love,
 And flash th' all-quick'ning fire.

III.

Oh, flash it through the gloom
 Of her chill bosom. Let her feel
 The wound her smiles alone can heal ;
 Then warm in youth's gay bloom,
 With fluttering heart, and melting eye,
 To light, and love, and Connal fly,
 Sweet tenant of the tomb.

THE CAPTIVES,

CONNAL.

Enough, you may retire. [*Exeunt Bards.*

I'll enter now,

An try th' effect that harmony has wrought
On her fantastic mind.

Enter EVERALLIN and MINLA.

EVERALLIN.

Too true indeed,

Minla, thy tidings prove. All search is vain.
She's gone, and with her Everallin's peace.

CONNAL.

What means he here?

EVERALLIN.

Connal! if thou hast dared

To violate our father's sepulchre,
And force Malvina from it; thy own life
Cannot atone the crime.

CONNAL.

What frenzy's this?

Hither I came to meet her.

MINLA.

Oh, she's gone!

CONNAL.

Gone whither? is it thy conspiracy?
Or thine, presumptuous youth? who lov'st to cross
Thy sovereign; and shalt feel the vengeance due
To such rash insolence.

MINLA.

Blameless, alas!

And ignorant of this unhappy chance,
Stand both of us.—Here, at her own request,
I left her, with dread doubts accompanied;
Fears and alarms, that with tumultuous rage
Shook her distracted mind.

EVERALLIN.

EVERALLIN.

And who shall say,
Whither they might transport her? o'er the wild
And desert heath; or down yon desperate rock,
Into the roaring waves?

CONNAL.

Thy boding spirit
Imaginary terrors conjures up:
Far off she cannot be. Round let them search,
Caverns and mountain-streams.

MINLA.

Where-ever found,
I fear some dire disaster. Her high mind
Into th' extreme was hurried.

Enter HIDALLAN.

MINLA.

Ah, that look
Of consternation, what may it portend?

HIDALLAN.

A tale of horror! Miserable Malvina,
So late the general wonder, is become
The melancholy ruin of herself;
Her reasoning powers quite lost.

EVERALLIN.

Distracting sounds!

CONNAL.

Unfold at once, old man.

HIDALLAN.

Still doth she stand
Before my frightened fancy. I still see her,
As the last victim bled beneath the sword,
Rush on the altar. Starting from her head,
Streamed her loose hair; and round she cast her eyes
With frantic glare — Where is he? Lead, she cried,
Lead me to Erragon! my life, my lord,

My murder'd Erragon ! then struck her breast,
And down with anguish dropt. To her apartment
They raised, and bore her off.

EVERALLIN.

Again, behold her,
Pale, and in wild disorder.

Enter MALVINA, with Virgins.

MALVINA.

Whither, whither
Drive these conflicting transports ?——
——Hence ! avaunt ! (*Seeing CONNAL.*
Hills, hide me from the fight ! lo, where he stands,
Monster of human kind ! how base, how bloody !
No feature of a king is in that face !
Murder usurps the place of majesty !

CONNAL.

Words such as these, what mortal but Malvina
Dares speak !

MALVINA.

Bid night in tenfold darkness shroud thee ;
'Thou'st done a deed to make the fiends rejoice ;
Killed every virtue that mankind reveres.
Meet me no more ! or, if we needs must meet,
Come with that sword which murdered Erragon,
And with it murder me. [*Exit.*

HIDALLAN.

Haste, follow, Minla ;
And try with every lenient art to calm
Her troubled spirit.

MINLA.

Some good power assist me.

[*Exit, with Virgins.*

CONNAL.

What thus could shatter her disorder'd mind ?

EVERALLIN.

The horror of her nuptials.

CONNAL.

Horror!

EVERALLIN.

Horror.

Her soul, too sensible to bear the shock,
Took refuge in distraction.

CONNAL.

Strange conjectures

Wake here, at every word. Thy secret motives
I know not; would not guess. But such alarms—
Say, wherefore do thy conscious eyes meet mine,
As guilt lurked in them? guilt doth in them lurk—
Thou art confederate with her—the vile mask
Of counterfeited madness is thy plot;
And each suspicious symptom—

EVERALLIN.

If a life

Of friendly freedom, and fraternal love
Unfulfilled, thy suspicion will not check,
My soul scorns further proof.

HIDALLAN.

Forbear, forbear.

EVERALLIN.

Forbearance urge to him, who would provoke
Patience itself past sufferance.

HIDALLAN.

Such contention

'Twixen brothers, who by Nature's tend'rest ties
Of love should be united, oh, it pulls
Here at my very heart-strings.—Be yourselves.
Be brothers.—Far, far off let royal Connal

Banish

Banish suspicion of a virtuous prince,
Whose friendship ne'er can fail him.

CONNAL.

The guilt's her's then,

Her's the vile artifice?

EVRAILLIN.

Vile artifice!

Recall the inhuman taunt. Oh, never, never
Could art so nearly nature counterfeit;
Never in such an agony of passion
Call forth th' affrighted soul; and so unfold
The shatter'd powers of reason.

CONNAL.

The last hour,

Her husband lived a bar to other nuptials.
That husband now is dead, by my command—
Oh, I were mad as the affects to be,
Not to discern it.

EVRAILLIN.

That her fears are false

As an unreal vision, I not doubt.
Your hands are guiltless of her husband's blood.
Yet what she wildly raves, her heart believes.
Your pity then she merits, not your wrath.
Her nuptials paused the frenzy.

CONNAL.

Still presumes

Thy arrogance? be gone.

EVRAILLIN.

Yet shalt thou hear.

Honor, though banished from the world beside,
Still in the hearts of princes should have place,
And this unkingly, this unfilial breach

Of a dead father's promise makes me shrink,
 In presence of that tomb.—The majesty
 Of buried Morven frowns before my view.
 His hollow voice groans forth Malvina's name.
 I feel the awful sound. Here, like a spirit,
 It swells within my breast; like Oscar's Spirit;
 Which, while the memory of his promise lives,
 Spite of a brother's, or a tyrant's threat,
 Shall prove me Oscar's son. [Exit.

C O N N A L.

Upon thy life,
 No more behold Malvina.—Curse upon
 This womanish folly! What! the more her pride
 Should damp love's flame, the fiercer shall it blaze?
 Where are thy arts to exorcise this fiend? [to Hidallan.
 To dim those eyes, whose quick'ning fires might strike
 A genial spring through winter's frozen breast;
 Hidallan, every word from those dear lips
 Raps me above myself; and one kind smile
 Would make my life immortal.

H I D A L L A N.

Ah, beware
 These sudden transports of intemperate passion!
 They're flashes from black clouds; and the more fierce
 Th' effulgence that bursts from them, the more fearful
 The dismal gloom that follows. Would you hope
 To bring back peace of mind? release Malvina.
 She never will be yours.

C O N N A L.

She shall be mine.
 Therefore devise some instant means—about it.
 —There's not a look or voice, but dwarts my will.
 Better rule o'er the eagles of the cliff;
 Or wolves that ravage 'mong the forest-oaks,

E

Wild

Wild nature's commoners, than be such a king.—
Well; hast thou yet bethought thee?

H I D A L L A N.

Every thought
Confirms my former counsel. Human laws,
And laws within the soul, with one dread voice,
Bid you release Malvina.

C O N N A L.

O'er my youth
A careless temper gives thee an ascendant,
And thou presum'st upon it. Hence to this woman,
Who listens to thy voice; and back return
With welcome tidings.—Go, without reply. [*Ex. Hid.*
This sage preceptor henceforth shall become
A stranger here. He is too cold and cautious.
I will proceed alone.—But how proceed,
In this dark labyrinth!

Enter an Officer.

O F F I C E R.

The man, dread sir,
Wrecked in the last night's storm, who scaped our search,
We have surprized within the clefted cave;
Their chief from Lochlin. Must he share the fate
His followers have endured?

C O N N A L.

A moment's pause.
—Most opportunely comes he, and full oft
Thus doth it chance; that Fortune, in her mood,
Strikes out, what labouring Art in vain essays.
Bring him; and bid Hidallan here attend,
Before he sees Malvina.—It must prove [*Exit Officer.*
Effectual, and it shall. In her delirium,

She raves on her lord's death; and I stand forth,
 Marked for the man of murder. On the instant,
 I will th' advantage seize. This prisoner here,
 Their chief, at once shall humour and remove
 The fond illusion. He on oath shall vouch,
 That 'mid the shock of their intestine broils,
 The prince expired beneath a ruffian's sword.
 To save his forfeit life, this shall he vouch;
 Say, he beheld him fall. It may restore
 Her wandering powers; evince my innocence;
 Aye, and (so mutable is woman's will)
 Convert her wayward passions to my purpose.

Enter ERRAGON and Officer.

C O N N A L.

Thou comest from Lochlin?

E R R A G O N.

Yes.

C O N N A L.

And know'st the fate,

Thy followers here have found, prepared for thee?

E R R A G O N.

Thy savage thirst for human blood I know.

C O N N A L.

Art thou so bold! thy blood indeed is forfeit;
 But yet the power of life, as well as death,
 Rests in our hands. It may be, there are means,
 By which thou may'st escape an imminent death.
 Mark then my words. The prince of Sora—

E R R A G O N.

Hah!

C O N N A L.

Know'st thou the prince of Sora?

E 2

E R R A G O N.

ERRAGON.

Know him?

CONNAL.

Know'st thou

Prince Erragon?

ERRAGON.

If I should say I did,

Were it a crime?

CONNAL.

Perhaps it were a crime.

He's hateful to my heart; and were he placed
Within my compass, he should feel my hate.

But to my purpose. 'Tis our royal will,
The stripling's death in Selma be believed.
Wilt thou, young stranger, to preserve thy life,
Confirm the death of Erragon on oath?

ERRAGON.

I scorn it.

CONNAL.

Say'st thou!

ERRAGON.

Upon such base terms,
My soul disdains it. The atrocious wretch,
Who, to preserve a poor precarious life,
Dares violate an oath's dread sanctity,
Should die for ever.

CONNAL.

Thou hast lived too long.

Hence with him.

[Exit Erragon, guarded.]

'Tis the malice of my fate.

All, all conspires against me. Else this prisoner,
Whom my least breath could quell, would he thus dare
Death staring in his face?

Enter

Enter HIDALLAN.

CONNAL.

At what a moment
Comest thou to pry upon me? while my cheek
Glow with indignant blushes. Oh Hidallan,
This spirit, this proud spirit of a king,
Is weaker than a woman's. Every hour
Sees me still more a slave; fresh trials brings,
To aggravate my sufferings.

HIDALLAN.

Rouze, dread sir.
At one bold effort gain the noblest conquest,
A triumph o'er yourself. And oh believe,
The sacred sorrow of repentant sighs
Its own relief bears with it.

CONNAL.

Yon vile captive
From Lochlin; with the offer of his life
I would have bribed him to avouch the death
Of Erragon, on oath, in Sora's broils.
The desperate wretch disdain'd it. Go thou to him;
To yon dark tower, above Carthmona's bay,
My best Hidallan, go. His stubborn spirit
With every plausible artifice essay.
Should he refuse: one only course remains.
Should he assent; thy daughter may prepare
Malvina for the tidings. Speed away.
If not by fraud, by force she shall be mine. [Exit.

HIDALLAN.

I must obey. Oh miserable fate
Of favorites! dependence absolute,
In its best form, is splendid slavery,

Cramped with the galling weight of gilded chains.
 I must obey. For sooner to heaven's thunder,
 Than to this king's wild rage, could I bid peace.
 Spirits of goodness, then, with pity judge,
 If sinning, the least sinful means I chuse
 Malvina to relieve!—

Enter MINLA.

MINLA.

With heart o'erflowing,
 Thy daughter comes t' implore thy guardian aid,
 For her unhappy friend. But my fears tell me,
 Something too strongly shakes Hidallan's breast
 For counsel now, or comfortable words.

HIDALLAN.

Minla, thy more than friendly warmth of soul,
 Thy passion for Malvina I well know.

MINLA.

What means my father? let me share the grief,
 That struggles thus for vent. What cruel dart
 Has fortune now to throw at poor Malvina?
 Connal has murdered her dear Erragon.
 The tyrant cannot bid him bleed again,
 A second sacrifice.

HIDALLAN.

The prince of Sora,
 Whose fate, my child, at Selma, thou deplorest,
 I must unfold myself. There is a man,
 From Lochlin newly come. With all thy powers
 Prepare Malvina to receive that man.
 The harbinger he is of her lord's death,
 By a slave's hand, in Sora's civil broils.
 Thou tremblest; and thy eager spirits start
 Into thine eyes, as they would search my soul.

Minla,

Minla, 'tis filled with anguish and despair.
A chaos of distraction ! to appal
Minds cast within a rougher mould than thine.
Yet must thou take one fearful glance.—This way
Leads to his prison. As we pass along,
By the blue waves of Lotha's sounding stream,
Thy father's trembling tongue, fast as it may,
Shall tell thee—Oh, unfortunate old man ! [*Exeunt.*

End of the SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

S C E N E, *A Tower.*ERRAGON *alone.*

ERRAGON.

A glorious opportunity once lost,
 Fate seldom will restore. Amidst his guards,
 With his own sword, I should have stabb'd the tyrant,
 Then fallen a noble victim of revenge.
 'Tis past; and Erragon's his prisoner,
 To what infernal purpose would he turn
 My rumour'd death?—It is not worth a thought.
 Malvina gone, let him possess a world,
 That holds no joy for me. Ah, best-beloved!
 Where are our former sweet delusions fled?
 My glittering spires, and airy castles sink:
 And I am left upon a lonely shore,
 To find my weary way to death's dark house.
 Here let me ponder then; where nought is heard,
 But sea-fowl, screaming to the torrent's roar,
 Till comes the destin'd hour.

Enter HIDALLAN.

HIDALLAN.

Sullen and sad,
 Lo, where he stands. And now I'll execute

This

This king's injunction. But, for the world's wealth,
Not urge the unhappy wretch to a false oath.

E R R A G O N.

Thou com'st fate's harbinger? Lead on; I follow.

H I D A L L A N.

Stranger, commanded by the king I come,
With offer'd terms, that may prevent thy fate.
Swear to the death of Erragon, and live.

E R R A G O N.

The king has heard my peremptory word.
But wherefore? to what purpose would he urge
So infamous a falsehood?

H I D A L L A N.

To thee surely
Little imports the purpose; so thy life
Becomes the recompence. His happiness
Depends upon it. The happiness perhaps
Of one, whom dearer than his life he loves;
The beautiful Malvina.

E R R A G O N.

What Malvina?

—My heart misgives.

H I D A L L A N.

The wife of Erragon;
Whom he made prisoner; and at once became
The captive of her charms.

E R R A G O N.

Spirit of Loda!

—Made prisoner? within his palace lives she,
Immured? devoted to his lawless will?
Thou hast beheld her? miserable woman!
Him too, the lustful tyrant, thou'st beheld?
Feels his flagitious soul no visitings
Of horror, of compunction?

H I D A L L A N.

Whence these starts?

F

E R R A G O N.

ERRAGON.

Thy reverend age is shocked. Thy cheeks turn pale.
Thy heart sheds fellow-drops of blood with mine.
Thy virtue will save her's.

HIDALLAN.

Perhaps he means

To wed her?

ERRAGON.

Wed her? Erragon alive!
And will not every husband's vengeful sword
Down to the howling ghosts th' adulterer plunge?

HIDALLAN.

Thy words burst wildly forth. These violent transports
Have more than common cause?—who art thou?—

Enter an Officer.

OFFICER.

Connal

Demands an instant answer from Hidallan.
Wherefore, I know not; but his mind's emotion
Gives cause of apprehension.

ERRAGON.

Hush, my heart!

HIDALLAN.

Speak thy resolve at once.

ERRAGON.

My destiny,
My destiny drives on! I must behold her.

HIDALLAN.

Wilt thou, in presence of Malvina, swear
That Erragon is dead?

ERRAGON.

Lead to Malvina!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE,

S C E N E, MALVINA'S Apartment.

A sword and helmet on a table.

MALVINA and VIRGIN.

MALVINA.

The sanctuary ! what's sanctuary to me !
 I'll no more thither. To the steep rock lead,
 That frowns on that black flood. There, safe from
 Connal,
 Deep in the watery world my ghost may rest.

VIRGIN.

Still, still would I fain hope.

MALVINA.

Turn thine eyes there !
 Seest thou that sword ? oh, death to every hope !
 That helmet ?—it once graced my warrior's brow !
 Where is he now ?—And shall Malvina hope ?
 Leave, leave me to despair ! *[Exit Virgin.]*

Enter MINLA.

MALVINA.

That stifled groan,
 Minla, without a word, proclaims the worst !

MINLA.

Too suddenly I would not wound thy ear,
 With what, however slow, must come too soon.
 The worst, alas, has chanced !

MALVINA.

He's dead ?—I see
 The fate of Erragon in that pale glare !
 My husband's murdered ?—here I feel the wound,
 Deep in my brain ! it maddens ! to behold

His poor, wan phantom ! lo, it passes on !
And shakes its shadowy sword ; and half uplifts
The helmet from its brow, purpled with blood !

M I N L A.

Thy fancy forms vain fears. He's gone—

M A L V I N A.

I know it ;
For ever gone ; where spirits of past times,
Warriors and kings, his high-born ancestors,
Meet, and all-hail their hero. While Malvina,
His miserable Malvina ! — lead me to him !
My eyes would gaze o'er every gaping wound ;
My heart expire upon his breathless breast !

M I N L A.

Ah, all at random drives thy mind, dear lady.
He died at Sora in the civil broils.
So speaks the harbinger, who saw him dead.
Who saw ; and oh, my bosom more than bodes ;
Who did the murd'rous deed.—Your eyes are fixt ?
No words give utterance to your bursting heart !

M A L V I N A.

No words should utterance give, if it would burst.
But ah, it will not, Minla ! in thy bosom
Let me suppress the rest ; thy friendly bosom,
That answers sigh for sigh. Say, has the villain,
Struck with remorse and horror, own'd the crime !
For apprehensive conscience brings to light
Murders, that secret night had curtain'd close.
Fast as thy love can speak, unfold the tale
Hidallan tells ; for he has told thee all.

M I N L A,

No, not in words directly told me all.
Yet, forcibly as words have power to vouch,
His whole behaviour warranted.—He spoke

In such strange starts of passion ; with a voice
 So broken ; with such caution ; couched in words
 Of such alarming import—ah, Malvina !
 This harbinger's the horrid murderer,
 Sent by the savage Connal.

M A L V I N A.

Thy suspicions,
 Minla, strike out a fearful flash of light,
 That naked lays the heart of this black fiend.
 Most mortal was his hate to Erragon.

M I N L A.

Which he, by this insidious villain's hand,
 So fatally has wreaked.

M A L V I N A.

If it be so—
 But then this sword and helmet found i'th' cave !

M I N L A.

The murderer's trophies, dropt in the affray ;
 Which stronger makes the charge. But oh ! my father,
 (Were more proof wanting), when he sent me hither,
 To warn, and to prepare thee for th' event,
 Gave the dread tidings, by that sole injunction,
 An oath's full warranty.

M A L V I N A.

More horribly,
 Each moment, glares the truth. And will no bolt,
 Down to the centre, the assassin hurl !

Enter V I R G I N.

V I R G I N.

A stranger, just arrived from Locklin, lady,
 Intreats an interview.

MALVINA.

MALVINA.

Minla, 'tis he!

His tongue would tell the tidings of that murder,
Which his hands perpetrated.—Hence, hence with him!
Let the wild ocean's waves between us roll!
More dreadful than the glare of midnight ghast,
His presence would appal me! stop, ———
His fatal entrance.

MINLA.

Vain were the attempt.

Commissioned by the king, th' assassin comes;
Whose force defies resistance. He must enter.

MALVINA.

Inhuman! would'st thou have my eyes meet his;
Behold the barbarous hand that did the deed,
Red with my husband's blood? first shall his sword—
His sword? Yet, yet a moment's pause.

MINLA.

Some answer

Must be dispatched.

MALVINA.

His sword!—ah, whither drives
The transport of that thought?—I'll see th' assassin,
Confront him; search his secret soul; and then—
I am wrought up! go, Minla; give him entrance.
Now for a deed of dreadful justice! love [*Exit Minla.*
Marshals me on! vengeance and love! hark, hark!
'Tis Minla. She comes forth. She points towards me,
And with her the assassin! see, she leaves him;
And this way doth he move. Why shrinks my heart!
Muffled he comes, like murder! now, dear shade!
Ghost of my martyr'd lord! behold thy wife,
Beyond the weakness of a woman dare,
And give thee blood for blood!

Enter ERRAGON.

ERRAGON.

Be still, my soul—

MALVINA.

Infernal monster!—

[offering to stab him, she starts back.

—Ah! support me! save me!

Tremendous power of Loda!—if thou comest

[to Erragon.

The spirit of my husband, from the tomb—

ERRAGON.

I am thy husband. Be composed, my love;
Thy Erragon.

MALVINA.

My Erragon! earth open;
And hide me from his sight!

ERRAGON.

Down, dreadful thoughts!
That make my blood run chill. While I have power
To hear thee, oh, unfold the cause. Thou speak'st not!
Thy pale lips tremble! let thy husband's arms
Warm thee to life and love.

MALVINA.

Not till thus humbled,
I have implored forgiveness for th' attempt
Gainst thy dear life, and called the spirits of earth,
And air to witness, that I thought thee dead;
Murder'd, alas! and at thy murderer aim'd,
Mistaking, the rash sword.

ERRAGON.

From lips like those,
Breathing sincerity; and truth, and love.

Wants

Wants there another word to win conviction ?
 No, I at once behold the tyrant's hand,
 Work darkly on to his infernal purpose,
 Marriage with thee. But never would Malvina
 Wed such a wretch, whom every human heart
 Must shudder at with horror ?

MALVINA.

Wed him ! oh
 Lived there no man but he ; to shun his arms,
 Fearless I'd plunge myself from the steep rock,
 To the wild ocean's monsters.

ERRAGON.

Stop thy tears.
 They find the way into thy husband's heart,
 The well-known way, Malvina.

MALVINA.

Such a tale
 I could unfold to thee. But let it die.
 Believe me, oh believe ! Malvina hates him
 Worse than the midnight-fiend ; and thee enshrines
 Here in her soul, with every gracious act
 Thy love's dear monuments,

ERRAGON.

I do believe ;
 Thy anxious spirit, starting from thy eyes,
 Proclaims the truth. In this embrace, my love,
 Be all forgotten.

MALVINA.

Still in dark disorder
 A thousand questions cross upon my mind.
 Scarce can I ask thee, how thou hither cam'st,
 Scarce, scarce believe thee here.

ERRAGON.

E R R A G O N.

Since our sad parting,
Fortune I've met in all her ireful moods,
In my long forrowing search of thee, Malvina;
Till last night's tempest cast me on this coast,
Where all our woes will end. From Connal now,
Of my own death to tell thee I am come.

M A L V I N A.

Oh destiny! thy dealings still I dread.
Past perils gallantly o'er earth and seas,
Thou hast sustained, like some good spirit of light.
So my love whispers. But my fears, the while,
My ominous fears forebode thou hast sustained them,
Only to find fate here. Thus while with hope
Thy unsuspicious heart exulting bounds,
Gleams fearfully behind thee a drawn sword.
Flight, only flight, can save thee. Then be gone,
Though the dread word is death to thy Malvina,
Be gone, my dearest husband.

E R R A G O N.

And leave thee?

Thy unprotected virtue leave exposed
To the dark wiles of this insidious king?

M A L V I N A.

Full of distrust are guilty minds, like his.
And thine, alas, too open: on the least,
Slightest suspicion, Erragon, thou diest.
Then may thy wife indeed the tyrant wed.
But no; the self-same hour shall death's cold hand
Close our sad eyes.—He comes! the monster comes!
Oh, my dear lord! my terrors will destroy thee.

Enter CONNAL.

CONNAL.

Stand off. These arms alone shall lend her aid,
At this alarming hour : Connal alone
Breathe life into her lips.—Ah, could he too
Breathe love !

ERRAGON.

Down, swelling heart !

[Aside.]

MALVINA.

Withhold me not—

CONNAL.

Nay, gentle lady, shrink not. To condole,
Not to insult thy sorrow, Connal comes.
Such frowns of fate the boldest may appal.
But there's an hour, which all, like Erragon,
Much reach, and sleep within the narrow tomb.
Thy tears have graced the warrior's memory.
And now, that tribute paid, my suit perhaps
May entrance find to ears so deaf before.

MALVINA.

Never—

CONNAL.

Oh, how enchanting to the love
Within my bosom, this reluctance speaks ;
This sweet confusion, melting tenderness,
Though for a rival's death. Dearest of women !
Fare not a blazing fire.

ERRAGON.

Still, still be calm !

[Aside.]

CONNAL.

Too far at this nice moment I'd not press ;
Yet would my fond heart hope, ere the moon runs
Her monthly round, that Selma's bards might hail
Malvina Connal's queen,—

M A L V I N A.

It may not be—

C O N N A L.

It must.

M A L V I N A.

Impossible!

C O N N A L.

How tremblingly

Thy timorous eyes glance round, on mine, on his,
 As if his presence pain'd thee!—Is it so?
 Speak; and he's hence for ever.

M A L V I N A.

Give me way— [*Exit.*]

C O N N A L.

She's gone. Insensible as the cold tomb,
 To which she flies from me.—Yet shall my love
 Not quite despair.—Pondering thou stand'st; as all
 Were not well done? thy tidings, were they not
 Too sudden, too abrupt? didst thou relate them
 So craftily, that not a doubt remain'd?

E R R A G O N.

The tale I've told has banished every doubt.

C O N N A L.

She loved this Erragon; destruction on him!
 She doated, she still doats upon his charms.
 What to my importunity may yield
 Is forced by fear.—Well, be it forced by fear:
 I will enjoy the triumph. Expectation!
 How thou buoy'st up my spirit! 'tis not love,
 But every maddening passion met in one,
 That swells my soul's full tumult.—Yet I'll fix
 All sure; and quash, at present, future fears.
 —Mark me; thus far our bidding thou hast done,
 And saved thy life. Another deed remains,

The which if thy bold hand will execute,
I from thy low estate will lift thee high,
Above thy loftiest wishes.

ERRAGON.

Name the deed

That I appall'd shall shrink from.

C O N N A L.

Dares thy fword?—

But we are interrupted. Minla comes.

This way; and I'll unfold to thee my purpose. [*Exeunt.*

Enter MINLA, with a Letter.

M I N L A.

Not one step further.—Give thee to Malvina,
Thou fearful paper! in a thousand atoms,
First to the raving whirlwinds!—on their wings,
Oh, that I too were hurried;—false, false prince!

Yet why? he never gave one flattering hope.
And she has eyes, whose sparkling fires might quicken
A soul more dead than winter.—But why trust
The fatal secret of his flight to me?

Why am I singled forth to bear Malvina,
To bear my rival, news will break my heart?

“ At twelve the ship weighs anchor ; to the port

“ Safe may Malvina come ; where Everallin

"Is ready to receive her,"—aye, and with her

To fly from Minla to the furthest shore.

And shall I give this passport? speed their flight?

Am I so fond of misery? horrid thought!

That I should court it for my mortal foe?

Enter

Enter C O N N A L.

C O N N A L.

That daring ruffian seems by nature formed
For every desperate purpose.—This point gained,
What, if I now indulge my longing eyes
With one more farewell? ah, I must perforce.—
Minla still here?

M I N L A.

But why my mortal foe? [*not seeing the king.*
Her gentle nature never, even in thought,
Hath done me wrong. Nor doth she wrong me now.
'Tis jealousy, that works me to betray,
Murder, perhaps, the noblest of her kind.
For who shall say how far the king's revenge——

C O N N A L.

Revenge on whom?—thou makest me no reply?
But in confusion turn'ft. Of dangerous import,
Something's engendering there. Conjure not up
Unfavorable thoughts. What is that paper?
And wherefore do thy trembling hands secrete it,
As guilt were therein folded? On thy duty,
Give me the paper.

M I N L A.

Gracious Sir; this paper—
Beneath the seal of secrecy 'twas given.
And to betray that sacred confidence—

C O N N A L.

Give it!

M I N L A.

If thy peace of mind—if Everallin—

C O N N A L.

His name a thousand apprehensions wakes.
The paper—

M I N L A.

M I N L A.

Yet forbear, thus let me rend—

C O N N A L.

Minla, upon thy duty—

M I N L A.

Take it then.

The fatal paper, that destroys thy peace ;

And in one general ruin swallows all !

[Exit.

C O N N A L.

My hands refuse t' unclofe, my eyes to read
 Words that may blast their fight.-Come, horrible scroll !
 Though like a spectre every letter glare,
 Thus I unfold thee. “ From the port, this night,
 “ At twelve, the ship weighs anchor”—with the ship,
 Deep in th' unfathomed ocean mayst thou sink,
 Traitor ! and with thee thy vile paramour !

I'll instantly confront her with the letter ;
 Then cast her from my kingdom ; from my heart
 For ever cast the forcerefs. Yet this brother—
 Better he first should feel a brother's fury.
 Vengeance first cries on him ! and jealousy,
 With its gaunt brood of horrors, goads me on,
 'To crush the scorpion that would sting my soul ! [Exit.

End of the Third Act.

A C T

A C T IV.

S C E N E, *the Tomb.*MALVINA *alone.*

MALVINA.

What desolation one night's rage hath done,
 O'er sea and land ! it dashed my Erragon
 Upon a rock ; uprooted yon tall pines ;
 And rived the tough arms of the gnarled oaks.
 The coot that braves the storm ; the cormorant,
 And scudding roe that ranges the wild heath,
 In the close umbrage, round this ancient vault,
 Took shelter, where, in mournful musings wrapt,
 I've looked for my dear lord. He comes not yet.
 The tyrant's jealous eye still scans him o'er.
 Each moment with a thousand dangers teems,
 That raise a thousand terrors. Surely love,
 Imperious love, within the gentlest heart,
 Most highly sets his throne.

Enter VIRGIN.

MALVINA.

Why loiters Minla,
 My truest friend, at this alarming hour ?
 Didst thou deliver my impatient message ?
 Intreat an instant interview ? Her kindness

Ever

56 THE CAPTIVES,

Ever till now outwent my warmest wish ;
And now can she be changed ?

VIRGIN.

In such a time,
Never did I behold so sad a change.
Mute and amazed she stood with tearful eyes.
Her looks staid not on any object long ;
And quick from red to pale her colour turned.
Trembling and hoarse and broken was her voice,
As she groaned forth your name. Then all at once
She started from my sight.

MALVINA.

Virgin, thy words
Strike terror through my bosom. Every friend
Catches th' infection of Malvina's woe.
Even Erragon perhaps—he comes, he comes ;
Leave me.

Enter ERRAGON.

MALVINA.

Oh, never to my eyes more welcome !
Thy presence banishes a thousand fears.
Yet art thou safe from Connal's jealousy ?

ERRAGON.

Earth never groaned beneath a blacker monster.
Would'st thou believe ? his horrid love, Malvina,
Would make me my own murderer. I'm resolved—

MALVINA.

On what ?

ERRAGON.

I'll instantly unfold myself.
The terror of an injur'd husband's eye
May strike him with dismay. A mighty fear
Has power to quell the confidence of lust,
And bold imperious sin.

MALVINA.

M A L V I N A.

Oh, if there lived,
 Within his savage breast, one generous spark,
 Not quite extinct;—but virtue's hallowed fire
 Burns not upon such altars. Trust thee rather
 To the gaunt wolf, that prowls for midnight prey.
 His ravening rage of pity favours more,
 Than this barbarian's. Ah! my Erragon
 Fears, like myself, our fortune at the worst,
 Desperate of what may follow.

E R R A G O N.

Different ways
 Dost thou distract my mind. In this disguise
 If peaceably my passion rests, the tyrant
 Drags my dear wife to his adulterous bed.
 Should it flame forth in vengeance—Ah, Malvina,
 I'm driven with thee to the dread precipice;
 And headlong both must down. I'll call him forth.

M A L V I N A.

On death thy fury drives thee.—

E R R A G O N.

Die I must.—

Whether this present hour, or what comes next,
 Weighs not with me.

M A L V I N A.

But, who alas! remains
 Malvina's guardian then? robb'd of my lord,
 The rocks in vain would echo back my cries.
 Thou know'st him not as I do, Erragon;
 Else would'st thou fear the fellness of his wrath.

E R R A G O N.

Fear!—tho' his wrath could hurl a thunderbolt,
 Thy Erragon's proud heart would scorn to fear.
 Cease to persuade. My honor is at stake;

H

L 28

Let not thy apprehensions for my life
Rob me of that,—the all that's left me now.

MALVINA.

No; by my love! Malvina's awful vow!
Dead with thee in the grave I'd rather lye,
Thus honoured as thou art: for we were born
Heirs of illustrious praise. Yet spent, o'erpower'd,
And hurried to th' extreme; thro' Fortune's cloud
One glimmering ray I spy. Yes, Erragon,
There is a man.

ERRAGON.

What man!

MALVINA.

Speak not so rash.

In Selma I have found one faithful friend;
The brother of this king; good Everallin.
Fain would Malvina rest a trembling hope
On that brave prince.—And lo, where he approaches.
Retire, my Erragon. Perhaps—alas!
My thoughts are all bewilder'd; my heart bodes
I know not what. But destiny's at work,
And soon will finish;—one tremendous hour
Teems with the fate of both.

[*Exit Erragon.*]

Enter EVERALLIN.

EVERALLIN.

Abruptly thus

To break upon Malvina's privacy
Requires the kind indulgence of her pardon.
But Minla, whom I secretly dispatched
Upon an embassy of such nice moment,
No answer yet returning—

MALVINA.

M A L V I N A.

Everallin !

Art thou my friend ? I trust thou art. That look
 Confirms my trust ; and I will try thee home.—
 Oh, Everallin !

E V E R A L L I N.

With the smallest doubt

Wrong not my friendship, whose sincerity
 This instant hour of trial shall prove true.—
 I will restore Malvina's liberty.

M A L V I N A.

Thou promisest, alas ! thou know'st not what.—
 Wilt thou indeed restore my liberty ?

E V E R A L L I N.

Friends, brother, country, I for thee renounce.

M A L V I N A.

Oh !

E V E R A L L I N.

Wound me not with such another sigh.
 Insensible were I as the brute earth,
 Did not that countenance rouse every power,
 To minister relief. By each good spirit !
 To save such suffering virtue, I would die.—
 Still can Malvina doubt ?

M A L V I N A.

No, Everallin ;

Mistrust in friendship is dishonourable.
 I'd rather be deceived.

E V E R A L L I N.

Hear then in brief,

Sweet mourner ; and, if possible, be happy.
 By private means I have prepared a vessel,
 Which by the moon's auspicious light shall bear us,
 At midnight's secret hour, secure from Selma.

H 2

M A L V I N A.

MALVINA.

Thy friendship sinks into my very soul.
Leave, leave me, while 'tis friendship.

EVERALLIN.

While 'tis friendship?

MALVINA.

Oh Everallin ! I was born the bane
Of all that I most honour. Thou beholdest,
Prostrate the lost Malvina thou beholdest
Before that tomb ; a sanctuary no more
For two the most forlorn of humankind.

EVERALLIN.

Nay, lady, rise.

MALVINA.

But when I've spoke the secret ;
Have trusted thee with what my happiness,
My more than life itself, depends upon ;
Then, Everallin, sure thou wilt not then,
(How sharp foe'er the trial !) wilt not part
With every soft sensation that does grace
And honour to thy heart, thy feeling heart ;
Thou wilt not then betray me ?

EVERALLIN.

Wrapt in wonder,

My spirits all stand listening.

MALVINA.

—He who brought

Tidings that Erragon in Sora died—
Fain would I speak the rest ; but my fears check
My fault'ring tongue. Ah, then prepare thine eyes
For such a scene of wonder.—Now come forth,
Thou whom thy wayward destiny hath brought
To this high hour of peril.—Everallin,
Turn thee on who comes here !

Ente.

Enter ERRAGON.

In him behold
My life, my lord, the husband of my heart!

EVERALLIN.

Hah! Erragon?

MALVINA.

Alas! that fearful start!

—Oh my dear lord! Malvina has undone thee!
Yes we must perish both!

ERRAGON.

Malvina, no;

We must not perish both. Forth from the eyes
Of this brave prince a generous spirit beams,
Bright from the soul of honour.—By that honour!
That sacred honour! I conjure thee, save
A virtuous matron! save a dear-loved wife!

MALVINA.

Who lives but in her lord! that solemn promise
Of freedom, from a dying father's tongue,
Let filial duty pay! to his blest manes,
Reverent I bow me.—Venerable shade!
Hear from thy sepulchre Malvina's sighs,
At this dread hour!

ERRAGON.

Or if the chains of death
Hold thee incapable; do thou inspire,
Tremendous spirit of Loda! this young prince,
Whose virtues emulate his father's virtues,
To execute that father's will; and rescue
His captive from dishonour!

MALVINA.

Yet he speaks not;
Looks not; indignantly aside he turns.

ERRAGON.

ERRAGON.

Then there's no more but this.—Here thou beholdest
us,

Husband and wife, to the extremeſt verge
Of deſperation driven. If, in defiance
Of the red thunderbolt, the tyrant dares
This laſt aſylum violate, we ſwear,
A ſword ſhall here decide our mutual doom.

MALVINA.

Yes, will die both!

ERRAGON.

O'er thy dead father's aſhes
Our blood ſhall ſteam; his tomb ſhall be our tomb.
Outrage eternal to his honoured ſhade.
If not to Sora, we'll together go
To death. I've ſpoke, our fates are in thy hands.
Live we? or do we periſh?

EVERALLIN.

Thy demeanour,
Thy gallant ſpirit, thy high turns of fortune,
Paſſing the change and chance of mortal lots,
Strike me with wonder. But at once to quiet,
Far as I can, your apprehenſive hearts,
From me fear nothing. Everallin's powers
All ſhall go forth t' oppoſe a brother's will,
And execute a father's. You're both free,
If I can give you freedom.

MALVINA.

Thy words quicken
A dying heart within me.

EVERALLIN.

Heedfully,
Brave prince, attend my words. By my command
A veſſel's ready. Go thou to that veſſel,

Which

Which close to thy own wreck at anchor lyes,
 And shew this signet, at the midnight hour :
 There I'll Malvina lead : and while the morn
 Lights the white sails upon the wave of night,
 May that propitious spirit, who rides the storms,
 Secure from every peil, hence convey you,
 To Sora's happy haven.

E R R A G O N.

Gratitude,

That should inspire with thanks, makes mute my
 tongue.

Thy feeling heart must speak for Erragon. [Exit.

M A L V I N A.

And oh, for his Malvina !—from th' abyfs,
 Where fortune deep had plunged us, by thy hand
 Both are upraised to life and liberty ;
 The creatures of thy providential care.

E V E R A L L I N.

'Twas a hard struggle ! I've strained every nerve,
 And to thy virtues sacrificed indeed !
 'Tis past. Whate'er the colour of my fate,
 May thine for ever flourish !—Ah, Malvina !
 Another fear were fatal.

Enter CONNAL attended.

C O N N A L.

See my eyes

As they are wont ? or to their doubtful fight
 Forms some illusive spirit of the clouds
 A false presentment ?—can this be Malvina ?
 The model this of matron modesty,
 Infolded with that traitour ? Seize him, guards ;
 Who, in defiance of his king's command,
 Presumes on such bold conference. Instantly
 To prison with him and his paramour.

E V E R A L L I N

EVERALLIN.

If I've presumed against my king's command,
On me let fall thy rage. But harm not her,
Whose innocence is pure as unsunn'd snow.

CONNAL.

Whose innocence? Rash man, close I beheld you
In amorous dalliance. Still the guilty blush
Is crimson on her cheek. But that proof needs not,
What subterfuge has power to cancel this?
While thy own hand bears witness to thy treason.

[*Shows a letter.*]

What further will thy bold tongue speak?

EVERALLIN.

The truth;

That scorns all subterfuge. I own, at once,
And glory in the truth. Malvina's charms,
Her virtues, her misfortunes, in my breast
A friendship raised, firm and immutable.
And the brute rage of thy licentious passion
Urged me to snatch the noblest of her sex
From tyranny's foul grasp. Within the bay,
A ship, by my command, this night had borne her
For ever from thy reach; and this last conference,
Here at my father's awful sepulchre,
Was our eternal farewell.

CONNAL.

False; 'tis false.

You both are leagued in black conspiracy;
For which you both shall suffer.

MALVINA.

He is leagued

In no conspiracy.—wonder a while,
And consternation, mute have held my tongue;
But from the very stones a voice would break;
Should mine be longer silent; and not vouch

The words of this good prince ; that, from this night,
He and Malvina never would have met
In this world more.

C O N N A L.

And never shall you meet.

This very hour, an everlasting bar
I'll fix between you ; if a dungeon's gloom
For life be such a bar ; with wary watch
On all the traitour's motions. While for thee
A different scene shall open.

Enter E R R A G O N *guarded.*

E R R A G O N.

Will no one lend a sword,
To rid me of these ruffians ?

E V E R A L L I N.

Erragon ! *[aside.*

M A L V I N A.

Oh, death to every hope !— *[aside.*

C O N N A L.

Why bring'st thou hither
That man a prisoner ?

O F F I C E R.

By your royal order,
We seized the vessel anchored in the bay ;
Which, with fierce menace and assault of arms,
He would have forced from us.

C O N N A L.

Who sent thee thither ! *[to Erragon.*
How dar'dst thou to assault them ?

O F F I C E R.

To that question
Insultingly he answered by this ring.

I

E V E R A L L I N.

EVERALLIN.

Then all's discovered. [*aside.*]

MALVINA.

Miserable Malvina !

CONNAL.

That ring? give me the ring—'tis my own signet;
Which, Everallin, thou alone could'st lend.

Treason is round me—-you are traitours all.

—But thee, whose forfeit life my mercy spared,
[*to Erragon,*

What could tempt thee, in such a daring plot,
To rise against me?

ERRAGON.

Liberty ! the right,

The natural right of man. That strikes a fire
Thro' the cold coward's heart ; and gives the slave
To turn upon the tyrant.

CONNAL.

Kill him, guards ;

And set his slavish soul at liberty.

MALVINA.

Kill him !

CONNAL.

How's this? why, wherefore these emotions?—
Their eyes are riveted !—hast thou betray'd me?

[*to Erragon.*]

Thy insolent rash daring at the ship ;

That wild disorderd mien—oh, if thou hast !

A Villain, who art thou?

ERRAGON.

One, whose lightest look

Thy spirit should appal ! while vengeance thus,

Like heaven's own fire flames on thee !

[*Snatches a sword to stab him, and is disarmed.*]

CONNAL.

CONNAL.

Curfed slave !

But my fword fhall not end thee. Bring the tortures.

MALVINA.

Barbarian ! tortures ? at the horrible act,
 Nature would shrink ! the midnight-ghosts of murder
 Turn thy brain wild ! and in a frantic start
 Make thee th' avenger, with thy own life-blood,
 Of my dear lord, my tortured Erragon ?

CONNAL.

How ! Erragon ?

MALVINA.

Distraction ! ah, my frenzy,
 My frenzy has undone him !

CONNAL.

Erragon !

Is't poffible ? again let me behold thee.
 Turn'ft thou afide in fcorn ? insolent man !
 Connal fhall make thy haughty fpirit shrink.

ERRAGON.

That thou canft never do.—Behold again !
 Search, with thy fharpeft eye, if thou canft fee
 The fhadow of a fear. No ; tho' unarmed,
 And manacled, with all thy guards around,
 I'll brave thee ftill. My wrongs fhall call for juftice !
 Shall thunder in thy ears, Reftore my wife !
 Whom thy adulterate luft would violate.
 Tyrant ! reftore my wife ! or I'll rufh on thee,
 And dafh thefe desperate chains !

CONNAL.

On thy firft motion,

Thou dieft.

I 2

MALVINA.

MALVINA.

These arms shall snatch him from the blow ;
Or we'll together die .

CONNAL.

Afunder force them.

MALVINA.

He is my husband ! dread the bursting bolt !

CONNAL.

Villains, beware.

MALVINA.

Yet, dearest Erragon !

My life's in my own power.

CONNAL.

Away ; and watch her,

With strictest guard.

MALVINA.

A little while, farewell !

We soon shall meet, my love, in yonder clouds,
'Mid troops of blessed souls ; where fiends like him
Can never come to part us ! *[Exit guarded.]*

EVERALLIN.

Yet recall her !

Anguish like hers would melt a savage heart !

CONNAL.

To prison bear the rebel.

EVERALLIN.

Aye, to death.

A welcome sanctuary from such a king ! *[Exit guarded.]*

CONNAL.

And now, proud man, prepare thee. *[to Erragon.]*

ERRAGON.

Tyrant, yes.

I mark thy fiery eyeballs ; see my death
Dark in thy gloomy breast ! come, with my murder
Finish the bloody scene. While from the desert,
Night-ghosts

Night-ghosts start forth, and fix the fated hour,
 To sink thy foul in all its full-blown crimes !
 Till when ; hung round with horrors, think on me !
 And live the general curse ! *[Exit guarded.]*

C O N N A L.

What starts are these ?
 And throbs, unfelt before ? Methinks, his curse
 Takes place already. Night and her grim spectres
 Seem to invest me—what ! shall womanish dreams,
 And fabled ghosts fright Connal ?—hence, remorse !
 Vain phantasms, again I am a king.
 And conscience, tyrant conscience, shall obey. *[Exit.]*

End of the Fourth Act.

A C T V.

S C E N E, *an old Tower.*H I D A L L A N *alone.*

H I D A L L A N.

Some evil star scowls o'er our battlements,
 And menaces their downfall. Every eye
 Is darken'd with dismay. Minla has caught it;
 She flies Malvina's presence; and beneath
 Yon mould'ring tower sighs her sad hours away.

Enter MINLA.

M I N L A.

Come, with thy vengeful terrors, conscience, come!
 Wring with remorse her heart, who could adore
 The minion of renown and murder him.
 I merit every pang.

H I D A L L A N.

Compose, my child,
 Thy ruffled mind to peace.

M I N L A.

No peace for me.
 For Morven none. Into a wilderness
 Of wretches I have turned this happy land.
 Thousands shall rue the deed Minla has done;
 And execrate the murders! if my father
 Saves not the innocent victim of her frenzy.

H I D A L L A N.

A TRAGEDY.

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H I D A L L A N.

How strangely rave thy thoughts !

M I N L A.

I loved the prince !

Even to distraction Everallin loved.

And in a frantick start of jealousy,

His secret plan, entrusted to my hands,

To bear Malvina off, gave to the king ;

Whose warrant lies upon his noble life.

H I D A L L A N.

Unhappy child !

M I N L A.

Oh, had my father seen him !

Mute and disconsolate, a prisoner bound,

He passed ; his loose hair flowing from his helm

A gloomy guard behind.—

H I D A L L A N.

The soldiers' hearts

Beat high for their loved general. His life's safe.

Would I could hope the life of Erragon

Half so secure.

M I N L A.

Of Erragon ?

H I D A L L A N.

The Stranger,

Thou thought'st his murderer, is Erragon ;

Malvina's husband.

M I N L A.

Wretched, wretched Minla !

I've sinn'd beyond all pardon ! ah, she comes !

Her anguish sinks my soul. I hope, to death ! *[Exit.*

Enter

THE CAPTIVES,

Enter MALVINA.

MALVINA.

Where's now my boasted courage? every wind
That blows, the voice of Connal's followers bears.
At my own voice I tremble. As I pass
By the black umbrage of the rustling oaks,
Methought I heard a night-ghost shriek! and saw
Meteors of death shoot cross me! never more,
Living shall I behold my Erragon.

HIDALLAN.

Stay hapless lady! whither thus forlorn
And trembling fleest thou?

MALVINA.

Lead me, lead me to him!
Nay pause not; while I've sense and heart to follow,
Lead me to Erragon.

HIDALLAN.

Blest were Hidallan,
Could he obey Malvina. But alas,
Connal's intemperate passion has nor eyes,
Nor ears in its wild rage. If right I augur,
This evening sun may make a bloody set.
With patience wait th' event.

MALVINA.

Thy words that counsel
Patience, with tenfold agitation shake
My heart for Erragon. Even now perhaps
Cold in his bosom lies the cruel sword;
And can I patient wait? this moment go;
Or, as I am, defenceless and alone,
I'll to the prison; burst thro' every bar;
Kiss his pale lips, and die!—hah! who comes here?
Swallow me, earth! ye everlasting rocks,

Fall on me ! crush me from that monster's sight,
More terrible than death !

H I D A L L A N.

Safe from surprise,
There screen thyself, within yon mould'ring arch.
[Exit Malvina.

Enter CONNAL and Guards.

C O N N A L.

Spread wide th' alarm ! and let the horn of battle
Sound louder yet, and louder. Strike the shield.
Light up the warning fire on Cona's top.
Here's my fixt station.---Hear'st thou not, old man,
The wild uproar ? that calmly thus thou meet'st me,
While all's at wreck.

H I D A L L A N.

My lord ?

C O N N A L.

A thousand swords,
Unsheathed at once, flame o'er the heath. Loud Carril
Raised on the mossy rock the battle's song ;
And the deep found of death is on his harp.

H I D A L L A N,

Yet might Hidallan, at this fearful hour,
Presume---

C O N N A L.

The rebel rout, confusion on them !
Have burst the gates, and turned forth Everallin !
Who now would bathe his hands in brother's blood.

H I D A L L A N.

Ah, let not passion, with a whirlwind's rage,
Transport my royal lord.

C O N N A L.

But I'll have vengeance !
—That wily forceress too ! 'tis she has witched him.
K Malvina's

Malvina's charms have drawn the traitor's sword;
 And she shall feel my fury. To the soldier,
 Who guards her Erragon, this signet shew;
 Bid him, at fight on't, as his life is dear,
 A poniard plunge into his heart.

Enter MALVINA.

MALVINA.

Mine first!

Barbarian! plunge it first in mine!

CONNAL.

Malvina

Scaped from her guards! Hidallan, how is this?
 By what confederacy? who lent her courage
 For such a daring act?

MALVINA.

Despair! despair!

And frantic love! that towers above all danger.
 Thus hurried me with headlong violence;
 Thus lowly at thy feet, for her dear lord,
 Prostrates the wretchedest of womankind!

CONNAL.

Plead to the rocks, proud scorner! they are not
 More deaf to thee than Connal. Instantly
 See Erragon dispatched.

MALVINA.

He shall not.

CONNAL.

How!

MALVINA.

He shall not, till thy bloody sword hews off
 These trembling hands! I'll hold him—

Enter an Officer.

O F F I C E R.

They have storm'd
The citadel; and Everallin's name
Rends all the air. The madding multitude
Call him their king.

C O N N A L.

A brother's curse fall on him!
Unnatural traitor!

Enter another Officer.

S E C O N D O F F I C E R.

Everallin, sir——

C O N N A L.

Have the guards seized him?

S E C O N D O F F I C E R.

Marching at the head
Of shouting thousands, he freed Erragon;
Who snatched a lance; and from the prison rushed
Like lightning to the war.

C O N N A L.

With tenfold fury
My vengeance shall arrest him!—But, Malvina—
Perdition on the traitress! shall she 'scape?
—Mark me, thou hoary wretch! Guard well Malvina
Till my return.—Hark, hark! their shouts redouble—
Close let me find her kept; or, by the fire
That flames within my bosom, thy old age
From torture shall not save thee. [*Exit with Officers.*]

M A L V I N A.

Such a monster
The sun of heaven should darken to behold.
Thou heard'st his menace?

K 2

HIDALLAN

HIDALLAN.

Do not yet despair.

Whate'er Hidallan, even at life's last risk,
 Can execute, Malvina may command.
 In this extreme no moment must be lost.
 What's thy resolve?

MALVINA.

To die!

HIDALLAN.

Hah!

MALVINA.

Die, Hidallan,

As I have lived, my Erragon's chaste wife!

Enter ERRAGON, with a broken lance.

ERRAGON.

Thou never could'st have failed at a worst time,
 Vile weapon! still th' abhorred Connal lives
 To perpetrate fresh crimes. He flies me still.
 Villains are always cowards.

MALVINA.

'Tis himself!

The tyrant has not shed his precious blood!
 Oh, we will part no more!

ERRAGON.

Malvina? Close,

Close to my heart! that throbs, even while I clasp thee,
 With horrible misgivings. By what wonder,
 Soul of thy Erragon! hast thou escaped?

MALVINA.

My spirits all come crowding to unfold—
 But thus to meet!—the sudden, dear surprize,
 O'ercomes my faltering powers.

ERRAGON.

ERRAGON.

Securely here,
Lay every rude inquietude to rest.
In this one moment lose a thousand woes.
Soon o'er the tyrant shall my best-beloved
Triumphantly exult.—Hark ! hark !

MALVINA.

Ah me !

ERRAGON.

That sounding horn proclaims him.

MALVINA.

Erragon,

Hear me ! oh hear !

ERRAGON.

'Tis he !—Spirit of Loda !
New-nerve my arm ! and you, ghosts of my fathers !
Who hover on your clouds at fate's black hour,
Bend, and behold your son ! Behold him draw
Th' avenging sword of justice !

MALVINA.

Oh, if ever,
In the dear hour of love, Malvina's voice
Had power to stay thee, hold !

ERRAGON.

He towers along,
With fierce and frantic vaunts.—Turn, tyrant, turn !
'Tis Erragon, all terrible in wrongs,
That dares thee point to point.—He stops ! he turns !
—Mock me not eyes ! his guards, his guards fly from
him !
Rout and confusion all !—In wild dismay,
Precipitate he comes——

MALVINA.

My heart dies in me !

Enter

Enter CONNAL.

CONNAL.

Tenfold destruction seize them!—Oh shame, shame!
Betrayed—deserted—every sword flies forth
For Everallin!—At the traitor's nod
They would uncrown their king!—Hah, Erragon!

ERRAGON.

Monster of nature! yes.

CONNAL.

His curst accomplice!
Hateful as he.—The scorpion I would crush,
Here, in that minion's sight.

ERRAGON.

Thou bloodier villain
Than words can give thee forth!—But blows, not
words,
Horrible wretch! shall answer.

MALVINA.

Hold, I charge you!
On the bare earth implore you!—Or sheath here
Your murderous swords!—Malvina is the cause!
Let me the victim bleed!

CONNAL.

There shield thyself,
Vile braggart!

ERRAGON.

On thy love, Malvina, hence!
As thou regard'st my honour!—

CONNAL.

Coward!

ERRAGON.

Coward?

Infernal villain! deep as to the lungs
Take back the lie.

MALVINA.

MALVINA.

Distraction !

CONNAL.

Thus I take it.

—Hah ! Everallin's horn !—But both ! come both !

[*A horn sounds.*]

ERRAGON.

No ; not for worlds ! I'll fight with thee alone.
 Though even a brother's sword reeked with thy blood
 My wrongs would still cry vengeance !—Here's thy fate !
 This, tyrant ! this devotes thee to the fiends !

[*Exeunt fighting.*]

MALVINA.

Oh, horror beyond words !—speak !—comfort me !
 Thou dost not speak ! Hidallan, in thy eyes
 There looks no comfort. Bear me to my husband !

HIDALLAN.

No ; not for worlds, Malvina ! From a scene,
 That might appal the boldest, let my prayers,
 My tears, restrain thee. Move not from this tower
 Till from these lips thou hearst the voice of fate. [*Exit.*]

MALVINA.

Tremendous interval !—My lord ! my love !
 He hears not.—Will he ever hear me more ?
 Thou that goest forth to battle with the brave,
 Dim phantom of the mountains ! with thy shield,
 And shadowy spear, turn wide the murderous sword
 That menaces his life in whom I live.
 —What sudden shout of horror ! round the tower
 The battle's darkness gathers !—stay I dare not.
 Yet whither to escape ?—Remorseless Connal !
 Few be thy steps, and speedy to the grave ! [*Exit.*]

Enter

Enter EVERALLIN, Officers, &c.

EVERALLIN.

This way went Erragon, burning in wrath,
To cross upon the king. Bard of the battle,
Follow with speediest step: say to the prince,
We here attend him—silence that loud horn:
Slaughter hath done its work. O'er heaps of dead,
And dying friends, the routed soldiers fly.
And tyranny, confounded with the shock,
Ne'er in these walls of freedom shall unfurl
Its crimson flag.—The fight's renewed!—they shout!
That general uproar is a nation's groan!
—At once a horrid silence!

Enter HIDALLAN.

EVERALLIN.

Hah! Hidallan!

Say, wherefore with that face of horror comes
My venerable friend?

HIDALLAN.

Forgive my tongue,
Whose dreadful tidings shall appal thy soul.
My royal master's dead.

EVERALLIN.

Dead!

HIDALLAN.

Erragon,
And Connal, both are dead. Furious they met;
They fought; and both together lifeless fell;
A mutual sacrifice to mortal ire.

EVERALLIN.

Oh, dire relation!

HIDALLAN.

A T R A G E D Y.

31

H I D A L L A N.

The guards bear along
The royal corse, by crowds accompanied,
With sorrow and with consternation struck.

E V E R A L L I N.

No more, no more. From off the scene of blood
Slowly to Selma's hall, with silent step,
See, the mute soldiers follow. While, at distance,
With every solemn instrument of war,
The gray-haired bards attend; Carril, and Ryno,
Ullin, and all the mournful sons of song.
A blow of fate, like this, makes victory weep.
Nor with them ends the terrible dismay.
As great a pang our heart must feel for thee,
Most virtuous, most unfortunate Malvina!

Enter M I N L A.

M I N L A.

Unfortunate indeed! only Malvina,
Much injured prince, could lift my eyes to thine.
Her sorrows only loose my tongue.

E V E R A L L I N.

Unfold,
Fast as thy grief will let thee, gentle maid,
What terrible disaster—

M I N L A.

All at once,
Ere I beheld her near, with trembling hand
Eager she clasped my arm; then startingly,
Not knowing where, pressed on; of all enquiring,
Who, who hath seen my Erragon? when under
The branching oaks she met a breathless body,
Born by two men. She gazed, she shrieked, she fell,

L

On

On her dead husband. Blest had been her fate
 Ne'er to rise more. But who hath power to speak,
 Or hear the story? There, alas! I left her
 On the bare rivulet's bank: the ghastly head
 Of her dead lord suspended on her knee.
 No tear falls down her cheek; her eyes are fixed
 In stedfast gaze upon his mangled body.
 Speechless she sits, and motionless as he,
 And almost of a piece.

HIDALLAN.

The prince is moved.
 His generous heart no longer can contain.
 He turns, he wipes away the starting tear.

EVERALLIN.

Lead, Minla, to the melancholy scene. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, *a grave by the river-side.*

MALVINA *supports the dead body of ERRAGON,*
attended by Virgins.

VIRGIN.

Ah, look not, sigh not thus!—Can looks or sighs
 Breathe vital warmth into his clay-cold breast?
 Nor eye hath he to see, nor ear to hear
 Thy unavailing woe. Or, if he had,
 Ah, wherefore would'st thou vex his gentle ghost?

Enter EVERALLIN, HIDALLAN, MINLA, &c.

MINLA.

There, prince, behold what passes all report!

EVERALLIN.

Was ever sight so mournful!—In what words,
 At this dread hour, shall I address thy woes,
 Ill-fated fair! yet may thy forrowing soul
 Some melancholy consolation find!

The

The warrior lies not there a common corse;
 He died in the defence of a dear wife;
 Admired and wept by all. Check then, sad mourner,
 This violence of grief; and freely ask,
 Best, and most worthy of the worthiest lord!
 Whate'er my power can give.

H I D A L L A N.

She hearkens not;
 But, like some monumental image fixed,
 Hangs pondering o'er the dead.—Ah, what a sigh!

E V E R A L L I N.,

Nay, interrupt her not. That burst of grief
 May more relief afford her, than our vain
 Condolements all.

M A L V I N A.

This is a ghastly sight!

[Still looking at the body.]

One hour ago, one little hour ago,
 Fresh as an April morning he went forth
 Gallant to battle.—Then he did not wear
 These bloody marks of murder!

M I N L A.

Hold, hold, heart!

M A L V I N A.

This manly face was not distorted then!——

H I D A L L A N.

Some pitying power assist!

M A L V I N A.

Then his strained eyeballs
 Started not from their spheres!—Look there! look
 there!

How clotted! how congealed!

E V E R A L L I N.

Nature must fail

In such conflicting transports.

L 2

MALVINA.

MALVINA.

We were once ;

Or was 't illusion ? Once, my Erragon,
 We were the happiest pair love ever joined ;
 One heart, one mind.—Thy death has broke the charm,
 And the short vision's vanished.—Hark ! I heard
 His gentle spirit call.—Rise, my loved lord !
 Rise, and in pity take Malvina's soul !
 Good Everallin shall in Selma see
 Our rites performed, and all due honours done.
 Yet happy, oh, thrice happy had we been,
 Had Selma ne'er beheld us !—Foolish eyes !
 What would ye weep for ?—Safe the slumberer lays,
 From the loud storms of fortune ; and with this

[Takes his sword.]

Points me to the same haven.—Lo, I come !

Thus, thus, exulting come ! *[Stabs herself.]*

Oh faithful sword !

Lord of my love ! I'm thine—in Connal's spite—

In cruel Connal's spite—for ever thine ! *[Dies.]*

HIDALLAN.

Oh horror, horror !

EVERALLIN.

This surpasses all !

MINLA.

Cruel Malvina ! thou hast killed thyself ;

And ah, thy wretched Minla ! *[She faints.]*

EVERALLIN.

Haste, assist !

She faints, poor maid ! desirous, even in death,

To join her friend. These tributary drops,

Noblest of human kind ! from Everallin

Take, and farewell !—And you, attendant shades !

Who, couched in clouds and whirlwinds, oft behold

Virtue, un sullied as the morning star,

Making this melancholy close ! oh lead,
To the dark land of shadows lead along
This pair unparalleled. There (while our bards
Strike o'er their tomb the trembling lyres of woe),
Each heart-felt groan, mortality's hard lot,
To songs of joy triumphantly shall turn
'Mid kindred spirits of the great and good. [Exeunt.

End of the FIFTH ACT.

E P I L O G U E.

By THOMAS VAUGHAN, Esq.

Spoken by Mrs. SIDDONS.

AT length our bark has reached the wished-for shore,

The winds are hush'd—but is all danger o'er?

The trembling bard still hovers o'er the main—

Still dreads the dancing waves that lash in vain;

Clings like th'affrighted sailer to the mast,

And shudders at the dangers he has past.

Dangers indeed—for who, in times like these,

Would launch his ship to plough dramatic seas?

Where growling thunders roll, and tempests sweep

Such crouds of bold adventurers to the deep.

O'er his poor head the winds of malice blow,

And waves of angry censure rage below.

Critics, like monsters, on each side appear,

Herald, the whale; and shark, the *Gazetteer*—

If these he chance t' escape, there comes a squall

From *Lloyd's*, *St. James's*, *London*, or *Whitehall*;

Here *Chronicle*, like Scylla, guards the coast,

There foams Charybdis—in the *Morning Post*.

Mark how they break his rudder, cut his cable,

Tear up plan, diction, sentiment, and fable;

Their order is—an order they enjoy,

To seize, to burn, to sink, and to destroy.

What wonderous chance our author should survive,

That in such boisterous seas his bark's alive?

But

But fond Ambition led the bard along,
And Syren Muses tempted with a song ;
Fame, like another Circe, beck'ning stood,
Waved her fair hand, and bade him brave the flood.
Who could resist, when thus she shewed her charms,
Soothed his fond hopes, and wooed him to her arms ?
Half-rigg'd, half mann'd, and leaky, as you find,
He tricked his frigate out, and brav'd the wind.

Your partial favour still may swell his sails,
And fill his vessel with propitious gales ;
Though peppered with small shot, and tempest tossed,
You still may land him on this golden coast ;
Convinced that those the surest path pursue,
Who trust their *all* to candour and to you.

F I N I S.

